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Employee News

Welcome to VDOF

- ◆ The VDOF and the Black Family Land Trust (BFLT) are excited to announce that Kellie Walker has been selected for a short-term internship opportunity with the agency. Kellie, a resident of Charlotte County, is currently a student at Southside Virginia Community College (SVCC). This internship was funded through the Forest Stewardship Outreach to Heirs and Underserved Landowners and Their Communities Grant (also known as the Coastal Heirs Grant), which is a joint project co-led by the VDOF and BFLT. This outreach project identifies and informs historically underserved landowners of the benefits of forest planning and active forest management. The goal of the grant is to help these landowners improve the sustainability, stewardship, and value of their forest lands. The internship provides the student exposure to VDOF programs and services, as well as a glimpse of the forestry profession and potential career options that may be available to them after graduation. It also provides more opportunities in the natural resources sector for students of historically underserved populations. The VDOF and BFLT are also working with SVCC to determine the feasibility of starting a 2-year forestry technical program on their campus, and the internship program is a part of this

process. Kellie will be working 1-2 days per week with VDOF area forester Amy Bigger and one day per week with BFLT throughout the month of September.

Coming Up

eVA Upgrade

- ◆ *Attention all VDOF eVA Users- Did you know eVA is getting an upgrade? The eVA Team at DGS has been hard at work developing a new and improved platform for its users. The GO-LIVE date is set for January 3rd. More information will be coming soon, but you can keep up with the progress at the eVA Transition Newsroom. Please keep watching The Branch for updates and training opportunities.*

News You Can Use

Alert! Laurel Wilt Disease

- ◆ Laurel wilt disease has been confirmed in Virginia. On June 17, 2021, Katlin DeWitt (forest health specialist) and Lara Johnson (urban and community forestry [U&CF] program manager) observed symptoms of laurel wilt on a roadside right-of-way sassafras tree in Scott County, Virginia. The Virginia Tech Plant Disease Clinic identified a fungal isolate recovered from the tree as *Raffaelea lauricola*, the causal agent of laurel wilt. The isolate was forwarded to USDA-APHIS Plant Protection and Quarantine program, and they officially confirmed the identification of *Raffaelea lauricola* on September 8, 2021. This is the first report of this devastating and lethal disease in Virginia. You can find more information about laurel wilt disease on our website: <https://dof.virginia.gov/forest-management-health/forest-health/insects-and-diseases/laurel-wilt/>

Last Week

State Forester

- ◆ Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry Bettina Ring, Assistant State Forester Terry Lasher, Urban Forest Conservationist Jim McGlone and Lara Johnson hosted Governor Northam at two project sites in Fairfax County. The first site covered two socially vulnerable communities where tree plantings will happen this fall. This project has been two years in the making and involved building community cohesion and trust through watershed education. One of the communities has no outside spigots, so watering the trees is still a problem to be solved. The second site was Arcadia Farm, which is on land that George Washington gave to his stepdaughter as a wedding present. Arcadia Farm has a dual mission of training veterans to be farmers and providing fresh produce to neighborhoods where it is not available. The farm recently received a U&CF grant from VDOF to plant an orchard to expand their production. The Governor seemed pleased to meet with some of our partners and got a better understanding of the scope and value of urban and community forestry.
- ◆ Rob Farrell attended the National Association of State Foresters annual meeting in Pittsburgh, PA. This was the 101st anniversary of the first meeting of state foresters which was also held in Pennsylvania. The meeting included sessions with Chief of the USDA Forest Service Randy Moore, Congressman Glenn 'GT' Thompson from Pennsylvania's 15th District, and CEO of the Society of American Foresters Terry Baker.

Forestland Conservation

- ◆ Molly O'Liddy (U&CF partnership coordinator) and Kinner Ingram (community forestry specialist), along with Trees Virginia Board Members Amy Murray and Ashley Appling, participated in the ranking

process for the fall applicants of the 2021 Virginia Trees for Clean Water Program. A total of 37 applications were submitted from across the state. Awards will be distributed in the next few weeks.

- ◆ The Waynesboro workshop webinar series completed its second week with Jim McGlone as the featured speaker. Jim spoke to an audience of 50 participants about how to make a forest in your front yard, which received many good reviews! The next webinar will be on Wednesday, September 15, and will feature the subject of restorative pruning after storms.
- ◆ Lara Johnson presented information about financing your tree planting project at the Rappahannock River Symposium in Fredericksburg, Virginia.
- ◆ Terry Lasher provided an update to the Rappahannock River Symposium about Watershed Implementation Plan III Goals for the Chesapeake Bay.

Forestland Resource Management

- ◆ Lori Chamberlin (forest health program manager) gave a presentation at the Culpeper Soil and Water Conservation District Board meeting about the emerald ash borer and biological control efforts in Virginia.

State Forest

- ◆ Mike Womack (forest management specialist) has returned from serving as Operations Branch Director for Cedar Creek, Cub Creek 2, and Delancy Fires in Winthrop, Washington during his recent fire assignment with Northwest Team 9. Thank you, Mike, for your service!
- ◆ Zach Olinger (forest management and education specialist) presented a check to the Grayson County Board of Supervisors for harvesting on Matthews State Forest over the past fiscal year.

State-Owned Lands

- ◆ Kudzu spray work on the College of William & Mary Ash Lawn property was completed for the second year treatment. Jack Kauffman (forest management specialist) coordinated use of the VDOF tractor with Central Region staff to help the contractor access areas for control work.
- ◆ Site preparation spray work was completed on the Southampton Corrections property on a stand harvested in 2020. Scott Bachman (senior area forester) assisted.

Central Region

- ◆ The VDOF held a new forester training regarding forest management on the Appomattox-Buckingham State Forest. The training, which was led by Peter Eales and Brian Lacey (regional resource foresters), included both classroom and field exercises on the topics of pre-commercial thinning, commercial thinning, shortleaf pine, longleaf pine and hardwood management, and cost-share options. Additional speakers included Charlene Bardon (program support technician), Lori Chamberlin, Jerre Creighton (research program manager), Jim Schroering (longleaf and southern pine beetle [SPB] prevention coordinator), Mike Womack (forest management specialist), Shannon Lewis (forest management specialist), and Dean Cumbia (director of forest resource management). Sixteen VDOF employees were in attendance from all across the state.
- ◆ Jim McGlone made a presentation at the Waynesboro workshop called “How to Build a Forest in Your Front Yard.” In it he discussed how encouraging citizens to plant trees helped with many public policy goals, but the “lawn first” model of modern landscaping got in the way of tree planting. By planting front yard forests we can weaken that model and make tree planting more acceptable.
- ◆ Jim McGlone participated in the Appalachian Trail Festival in Round Hill, one of our newest Tree City USA communities. Jim was invited to give a 45-minute presentation on how to plant a tree. This turned

into a 2 hour and 15 minute discussion about the benefits of trees to people, birds and bees, why using native plants is important, tree biology, tree production methods, cultivars, soils, and the new science of squaring the ball when planting trees. It did end in putting a tree in the ground. Jim's credentials were verified by the tree itself at the end. As he was removing the wrap that was put on the tree to protect the bark during transit he mentioned it could promote fungal growth, and it had.

Eastern Region

- ◆ Meghan Mulroy-Goldman (community forestry specialist) was invited to present Forest Management and Ecology to a class at The College of William and Mary. This is the second year that Meghan has presented this information in a virtual talk. Her presentation followed the Virginia Master Naturalist curriculum as will future outside speakers. At the conclusion of the semester, these students may become Master Naturalists if they choose. Meghan enjoyed the interaction with the students, remarking that they had very good questions that she was able to address.

Western Region

- ◆ Personnel from the Mountain Valley and Shenandoah work areas teamed up to host a 1-day dozer training class at the Augusta County Landfill. The purpose of the training was to provide training hours for full and part-time employees and allow them to become more comfortable and proficient operating the bulldozers, especially the newer models. Eight students rotated through four stations and spent time in 5 different type dozers, including a Cat D3 brought to the site by the USDA Forest Service (USFS). Station rotations included loading/unloading, pushing line in brushy and moderate terrain, and navigating a custom built obstacle course, courtesy of Darwin Rhodes. Carl Belew (Charlottesville shop mechanic) also assisted with the training. He talked about the importance of maintaining equipment, items to be aware of, and reminded all to arrive safely when driving the transport units. A big thanks to Clint Folks (natural resource specialist) for coordinating the day, and to the multiple instructors from Mountain Valley, Shenandoah, and the USFS that helped at each station. By day's end, the students had completed several elements of their dozer task books! (pictured)
- ◆ David Bryan (forest technician), Daniel Cloeter and Bill Sweeney (area foresters), all members of the Piedmont work area, volunteered their skills this summer on multiple western fire details. Upon their return to their small communities, there was much interest in what they had seen and done while fighting the western fires. Local TV stations shared their story and the link below to a local newspaper ties their service together nicely, also serving as a warning to Virginia residents that our fall fire season is just around the corner. https://roanoke.com/news/local/virginia-foresters-from-franklin-henry-patrick-counties-went-west-to-help-fight-wildfires/article_c149bd3c-0cc9-11ec-836f-a3951523096e.html



News Clips

- ◆ [4 Projects That Show Mass Timber is the Future of American Cities](#)
- ◆ [GOBIOCHAR: CLIMATE RESILIENCE AND RESTORATION USING BIOCHAR](#)
- ◆ [Southern Company and partners award grants to advance longleaf pine forests from Virginia to Mississippi](#)

- ◆ [Tree Fredericksburg Sale Takes Place November, 13](#)
- ◆ [Plastic Guards Should Not Be Used When Planting Trees](#)
- ◆ [Tree planting efforts aren't replacing burned U.S. forests — not even close](#)
- ◆ [Activities for Sept. 9 - Generation NEXT Legacy Planning Webinar Series](#)
- ◆ [Farm Bureau leaders discuss forestry issues in Galax](#)